

HOW WILL THE CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL MAXIMIZE ITS
ACADEMY CADET GRADUATION SUCCESS RATES BY 2012?

By

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This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future, but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future--creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

The process of selecting and retaining new police officers is one of the most important decisions a police executive makes. The quality of our hires arguably has a corresponding impact on our department's budget, image, and the level of confidence the community has in our organizations. When we consider purchasing a new service weapon, we conduct research. When we finally get the funds to replace our outdated computer system, we hire consultants, conduct research, evaluate potential suppliers, and enter into contracts. Many of these efforts are to replace systems or equipment lasting only a few years. But when you compare the cost of replacing a computer to the cost of selecting and hiring new police recruits, your decisions and the quality of training can either save you or cost you millions of dollars.

One issue that affects all law enforcement organizations is the cost of hiring, and then losing a cadet who fails to complete academy training. Given the cost of thousands of dollars each to recruit and hire, how might we reduce the potential for attrition during initial training? What steps can be taken to maximize the effectiveness of our recruit training, while also enhancing the chances of success for those moving through it? On the pages that follow, we will look at these two issues to see where, and how, this can be done.

THE ISSUE

Since 2000, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) has experienced an increasing rate of attrition in the number of recruits entering their academy. At present, they lose about 28% of each cadet class due to voluntary or requested separation from employment. The overall cost to test, select, interview, conduct health examinations, background checks, and then to feed, lodge, and train each cadet through the academy is approximately \$100,000. This means as much as \$2.8 million is lost each training cycle due to attrition. Even though the CHP employs more than 10,000 persons with an annual budget of \$1.5 billion, the cost of training attrition impacts its ability to meet the full scope of mandates in their mission.

Other large police agencies share in this loss of workforce and costs. For instance, the City of Los Angeles spends about \$100,000 to train each cadet and pays newly hired police officers \$51,000 a year. When comparing training costs for each cadet versus the starting salary of an officer, the LAPD could use the funds expended on unsuccessful trainees to hire dozens more officers each year. Like LAPD, the Texas Highway Patrol has an academy attrition rate of about 15 percent. The \$1.5 million spent on their attrition could also be converted into added personnel, necessary programs or other infrastructure to protect the public.

Across America, the loss of recruits and cadets in training is an expensive proposition. With an accelerating pace of loss at their Academy, the CHP needs action now to avoid the inevitable problems it will face with staffing vacant positions. We will examine the setting, the reasons for cadets leaving at the CHP and similar large policing agencies, and then describe the steps necessary to stem this flow. Without action, the

problem may stay the same, or even “correct itself.” It may, though, continue to worsen, a future we can hardly afford.

THE SETTING - THE CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

Just two months prior to the Stock Market collapse in October 1929, which ushered in the Great Depression, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 869, thus creating the CHP on Aug. 14, 1929. Included within the State’s Department of Public Works as part of the Division of Motor Vehicles, the CHP had an initial authorized strength of 280 uniformed men, 80 cars, and 225 motorcycles.

In the early years of the CHP, officers on patrol were required to call their offices from public telephones along their beats each hour for messages and to use passing motorists to report injuries, fatalities, and requests for assistance. In 1929, the California vehicle registration total was about two million vehicles and motorcycles. In 2004, however, California’s registered vehicles and motorcycles totaled over 32.7 million, and the state’s licensed drivers exceeded 22.8 million.¹

Today, the CHP is the largest statewide law enforcement organization in the nation, with 7,284 authorized sworn officer positions and 3,111 non-sworn personnel positions. The CHP’s operating budget is over \$1.5 billion. It is charged with performing a variety of general law enforcement and specialized services, including: commercial vehicle enforcement and regulation; protective services for state officials, employees, facilities and infrastructure; and providing assistance to local law enforcement agencies when requested.

CHP ACADEMY TRAINING PROGRAM

The CHP Academy is located in West Sacramento, just minutes from the State Capitol. The Academy can accommodate 280 students in dormitory rooms designed for up to two persons per room, accommodating up to four recruit classes each year. The dining facility is designed to seat 400 persons, serving three meals daily to trainees and staff. There is a multipurpose room that serves as a gymnasium as well as an auditorium for graduation ceremonies. Other physical training facilities consist of a quarter-mile running track, a 442-foot long obstacle course, 2.3- and 3.6-mile jogging trails, and a baseball field. A large water safety tank is used to teach water safety and underwater vehicle extraction rescue training. A recreation room is available for cadets during their leisure time. The Staff Office, which is comprised of a team of officers and sergeants, provides direct supervision of cadets, is also located in the Recreation Building and is staffed 24 hours a day.

There are seven classrooms designed to accommodate a total of 362 students. Three of the classrooms are tiered, and interlocking walls make it possible to divide the rooms for smaller groups. Each classroom is equipped with a video projector and other standard audiovisual equipment. Additionally, connecting cables are available for computer generated classroom presentations.

¹ Robert A. Wick, *The California Highway Patrol* (United States Phase Three Publishing, 1989), p. 17.

In addition to CHP-specific policies and procedures, cadets are responsible to complete the requirements of 42 "learning domains" mandated by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. During the 27-week program, cadets will receive over 1,100 hours of training. Cadets must be certified as Emergency Medical Responders during Academy training. The Emergency Medical Services Unit administers this 48-hour course. The Emergency Vehicle Operations Course is famous throughout the world as the finest law enforcement driver training program available. The course consists of a 2.3-mile, high-performance driving track, two skid recovery practice areas and a defensive driving course.

In a six-year period, as illustrated in Table 1 below, the CHP Academy's attrition rate per cadet class ranged from 8% to 28%. Disturbingly, the trend of attrition is rising, even as the CHP seeks to graduate their four classes per year. It should be noted that due to the state's fiscal crisis, the Academy graduated only one cadet class in 2003 and three cadet classes in 2004.

Table 1: Cadet Attrition (2000-2005)

| | Number of classes conducted | Average size of each class | Total Entered | Total Graduated | Attrition Rate |
|------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 2000 | 4 | 129 | 517 | 468 | 10% |
| 2001 | 4 | 146 | 587 | 543 | 8% |
| 2002 | 4 | 147 | 589 | 516 | 12% |
| 2003 | 1 | 160 | 160 | 142 | 11% |
| 2004 | 3 | 71 | 215 | 171 | 20% |
| 2005 | 4 | 90 | 360 | 259 | 28% |

CHP cadets are tested mentally, physically, and emotionally. There is tremendous stress intentionally placed upon them to determine if they can satisfy performance standards while under pressure. Consequently, from 2001 to 2006, there have been a total of 281 cadets who resigned. Illustrated in Table 2 below are the reasons why cadets resigned during their training.

Table 2: Reasons provided by 281 CHP cadets who resigned from Academy training program (source: CHP Academy records: 2001-2006)

| REASON PROVIDED | NUMBER | RATE |
|-----------------|--------|------|
|-----------------|--------|------|

| | | |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Wrong career choice | 56 | 20% |
| Failed high speed driving or other academic standard | 34 | 12% |
| Family issues/crisis | 27 | 10% |
| Unprepared for the stress or demands of academy life | 34 | 12% |
| Injury | 41 | 14% |
| Other reasons (not specified) | 89 | 32% |
| TOTALS | 281 | 100% |

In search of future solutions to address why cadets resign from academy training, it is important to note the issues and successes of other police agencies; consider what some experts have to say; and assess the CHP's own initiatives.

EFFORTS BY OTHER POLICE AGENCIES

The CHP is not alone in its struggle to retain those it hires and places into recruit training. The experiences of others confirm this as an industry problem. They also point to some possibilities with regard to resolving it in a beneficial manner. Table 3 depicts three other law enforcement agencies and officials that were interviewed. The following is a summary of their comments.

Table 3: Police agencies interviewed

| | Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) | Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) | Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP) |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| Person interviewed | Sgt. Richard Laguna | Capt. Scot Houghton | Capt. Andrew Stritmatter |
| Number of sworn officers | 9,500 | 5,000 | 1,500 |
| Budget | \$1 billion | \$470 million | \$282 million |

| | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|
| Starting Salary | \$51,000 | \$29,000 | \$32,000 |
| Average rate of attrition from 2002-2006 | 18% | 15% | 25% |

As can be seen, the rate of loss in academies for these agencies is similar to that of the CHP. Questions asked of their respective representatives regarding losses and possible preventative measures also reveal a similarity in identified problems.

Question One: What are some of the reasons why cadets drop out of your academy training program?

LAPD

Just looking for a job instead of a law enforcement career

The number one reason why cadets fail to graduate is most are **merely looking for a job** and not a law enforcement career. When they begin to feel the stress of the training program, they come to realize police work may not be the job for them and they reevaluate their career choice. It is in this phase, usually in the first three weeks of training, when we lose a lot of cadets.

Firearms training

The second reason why we lose cadets is because they fail firearms training. On average, we lose about 26% of our cadets to firearms training when they fail to qualify or meet the performance standards.

Texas DPS

Physical training and defensive tactics

Physical training and defensive tactics are the primary reasons why cadets drop out of our academy. We are in the process of changing our physical and defensive tactics training program to make sure our training techniques are more helpful in developing the learning process of cadets. Rather than focus our efforts to see who is not meeting standards, and routinely failing them, we want to change the training philosophy of instructors so more can be done to help the cadet succeed.

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Insincere applicants

There are a significant number of applicants who are still employed and have arranged to take two weeks vacation with their employer to participate in the Ohio Highway Patrol Academy. These insincere applicants quit after just two days and return to their original employer when they discover academy training is tougher than they thought.

Wrong career choice

Our cadets come from three primary environments: mom’s house, the college campus, and the real world. Cadets who come from “mom’s house” have very little life

experience and find the academy discipline and structure to be shocking, and so they quit within the first two weeks. Cadets from the college campus are more knowledgeable of what they are getting into, and we find they have a 50% chance of graduating from our academy. The bulk of our successful graduates are from the “real world,” which are people who have been working and supporting themselves for many years. They have good life management skills; they are disciplined; and have a strong work ethic.

Question Two: What PRESENT improvement measures did your organization implement to help minimize or prevent cadets from dropping out of the training program?

LAPD

Cadet Assistance Program

This program is designed to assist the cadet applicant to prepare for the rigors of the academy physical training program. But we find there are two elements that must be present in order for this program to be a success and have positive impact on cadet attrition rates at the academy: #1, the cadet applicant must be interested and #2, the cadet applicant must consistently be committed whereby their intentions are supported by action.

Training instructors’ modified work schedule

When we changed our instructors’ schedule to a 4/10 work schedule (i.e., working 10 hours per day, four days/40 hours per week), we had them spend one hour each day, before the beginning of the class sessions and one hour after the end of class sessions, to provide remediation to those cadets who need or want them. We find this approach helpful because it reduced our attrition by about 10%. The 4/10 work schedule for instructors worked effectively since the cadets’ work on a 5/40 work schedule (i.e., working eight hours per day, five days/40 hours per week). In effect, it gave the cadets an opportunity to spend more time with the instructors on any training topic they needed to improve; such as firearms training or other academic topics.

Remediation classes

Because of the instructor’s modified work schedule, we were better able to devote time to cadets who needed the extra training. What we do is offer several classes at once and it is the cadet’s responsibility to attend the class they truly need in order to help them meet training standards. With fewer cadets in class, this type of learning environment provides the cadet an opportunity to discuss topics. The mutual objective is to help the cadet improve their academic or tactical performance. The remediation classes has helped reduce our cadet attrition rates and is part of the reason why in 2006 we are seeing an improvement of about 10% less failure rates when compared to 2005.

Texas DPS

Exit interviews

We recently implemented exit interviews as a way to find out why cadets are leaving our academy. One thing we learned from the exit interviews is we need to address some of the rigid and conservative demeanor of our instructors in order to change the behavior of actively looking to fail cadets rather than actively helping cadets.

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Mentor program

We devote time and training staff to those cadets having difficulty with the curriculum. If they need remediation on a subject, or performance requirement such as emergency vehicle driving, we make sure the cadet is mentored to help them succeed.

Modified Orientation

We have scaled back the military style orientation for the first eight days of training. During this time period, we are providing more examples of expected behavior

Expanded communication with applicants

We have expanded our communication with applicants as they progress through the stages trying to better prepare them for adjustment to the Academy.

Question Three: What FUTURE improvement measures or innovations will your organization implement?

LAPD

Collaboration between our personnel department and academy staff in developing entrance examinations

We are looking into aligning our application and hiring process so we do not lose good candidates because of unrealistic entrance examinations. Otherwise we end up with cadets in the Academy who quit the first week because they had no idea of what the job is about. And so we are trying to get our personnel department and academy staff to collaborate in developing a hiring process that had the in-put of both personnel and academy staff.

Presently, there is no working relationship between people responsible for recruiting, hiring, and training new LAPD employees. Therefore, you get three very diverse opinions on how the selection process should work. For example, the performance examination of dragging a 200-pound dummy is more applicable to a firefighter than the realistic day-to-day duties of an LAPD officer. Thus, we are losing a lot of people who have the smarts and the commitment to become good officers, but because they cannot drag a 200-pound dummy, they are disqualified without consideration to their education and level of demonstrated commitment to a law enforcement career. By developing the necessary working relationships between our personnel department and academy training staff, we effectively address cadet attrition rates by improving the recruitment and selection process. We feel part of the solution of reducing cadet attrition is evaluating our selection process prior to academy training.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Training Model

We are seeking to collaborate with the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training in order to adopt the RCMP police training model for our academy. The RCMP model is based on dedicating a core of instructors throughout the training phase of a specific cadet class, which include their academy time and field time. The result is consistent training for the cadets: both in the academy and in the field. This unique training approach is primarily **performance-based**. In essence, we cut down on a

lot of written examinations and paperwork and focus primarily on performance. This is a shift in the training curriculum, whereby performance is the key measure whether or not a cadet will graduate from the academy. We believe a performance-based training program will maximize graduation rates. We will be working with POST to explore this new training approach.

Texas DPS

Work experience as the minimum educational requirement

We also discovered most of our cadets who do not have a high school diploma, but with at least three years work experience, have a greater commitment to complete the academy training program. Therefore, when an applicant satisfies the minimum education requirement, we are implementing the new **entrance requirements that emphasize work experience rather than a high school diploma**. For instance, we recently accepted a person to our academy who did not have a high school diploma, but who is a certified jailer and has worked for the state over three years. We are confident this individual’s life experience and work ethic are critical factors that will allow this person to succeed in our academy and impact the cadet attrition rates.

Change mindset of training instructors

There must also be a “change in the mindset of some of our instructors.” There are some instructors who believe the training program is a standard a cadet must satisfy or be the cause for rejection from the training program. We have determined that a rigid approach in the way cadets fulfill the training standard is not the best way to develop today’s young people. We are taking more time to understand how to best assist our cadets, whereas in the past, we do not even bother; the cadets either meet the standards or they are out of the training program.

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Survey cadets who failed to complete academy training

We have just recently sent out over 100 surveys to determine the reasons why they either volunteered to resign from the academy, or why they failed to succeed in the training program. Our preliminary findings revealed that a significant number are citing “family issues.” Once this survey is completed, we will reevaluate our training program to see if we can make improvements.

Early notification of command assignments

In the past we gave cadets just two weeks notification of where their first command assignment will be after graduation from the Academy. We are now striving to improve by giving the cadets more time and notifying them at least a month before reporting to their new command.

Table 4: Comparable facts

| | CHP | LAPD | Texas DPS | Ohio State Highway Patrol |
|--|-----|------|-----------|---------------------------|
|--|-----|------|-----------|---------------------------|

| | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Training period | 27 weeks | 28 weeks | 27 weeks | 29 weeks |
| *Campus style or Live-in requirement | Live-in | Campus | Live-in | Live-in |
| Average number of cadets in each graduating class from 2000-2005 | 123 | 20 | 40 | 47 |
| Average cost of hiring/training one cadet | \$100,000 | \$100,000 | \$35,000 | 33,000 |

*Campus style (cadet attends classes during the day and go home at night). Live-in (require cadets to reside in the academy).

Collectively, the police agencies interviewed were not satisfied with their present attrition rates. They are implementing improvement measures and seeking to maintain attrition at 5 to 10 percent. While police academies are trying a different approach, some academic experts suggest we **focus on the applicants and the selection process** before trying to improve the academy's curriculum.

WHAT THE EXPERTS ARE SAYING

Research indicates good performance in police work is not something that most tests are able to measure. Kurt Nelson, in Law and Order magazine in 1999, gathered information from police agencies in each state for his article "To Select the Best: A Survey of Selecting Police Officer Candidates."² He gathered information from a random sample of municipal police agencies, including the largest department in each state, and from a random sample of additional agencies. According to Nelson, the five most common screening methods were:

- Written test
- Medical exam
- Background investigation
- Psychological exam
- Physical fitness test

Nelson concluded that the **quality of the testing method** and not the testing method itself was crucial. The agencies with reasonable criteria and using at least the top five screening methods of selection should, according to Nelson, expect a valid passing rate. Nelson concluded that the better the quality of the testing method, the less risk exists the police department will have someone who will betray the trust placed on the officer by the agency and community.

² Kurt R. Nelson, "To Select the Best: A Survey of Selecting Police Officer Candidates." Law and Order, October 1999, Vol. 47: pp. 42-45.

Another example of the move away from predominant reliance on written tests, and towards physical agility testing, psychological screening, oral interviews and assessment, is illustrated in an article written by David A. Decicco, "Police Officer Candidate Assessment and Selection," published in the December 2000 edition of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin.³ Decicco concludes that to ensure better police performance, departments should **scrutinize the selection of candidates before attempting improvements in police officer training.**

Decicco also recommends that a department use an assessment approach for recruitment selection according to a general outline. Candidates should initially take an exam, and those with high scores would be invited to participate in a one-day assessment test. Usually, each candidate takes part in a series of five to eight exercises. Each is designed to assess a different aspect of police work. Some examples include evaluating a candidate's ability to:

- Deal with the public.
- Maintain emotional stability in stressful situations.
- Work in teams.
- Communicate adequately.
- Demonstrate the proper use of force.⁴

CHP EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

CHP Project Team

A CHP project team was assembled in 2006 to examine the issue of maximizing academy cadet graduation rates. The team discussed alternatives that would positively impact the focus issue and subsequently proposed the following recommendations:

Establish the Cadet Hiring and Innovative Program Systems Team

In the past, staff would address cadet attrition issues at the CHP Academy and develop great ideas, but, for one reason or another, they were not necessarily implemented. The Cadet Hiring and Innovative Program Systems (CHIPS) team was created to address that communications breakdown. CHIPS will be responsible to oversee the reorganization of units; implement new testing, hiring, and training procedures, and to explore innovative hiring and training ideas to maximize the use of resources and improve cadet graduation success rates.

The CHIPS team will be comprised of diverse subject matter experts and high-ranking executives with policy-making authority to explore innovative trends and pursue ideas such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police training model. In addition to studying trends and reaching out to other police training academies, the CHIPS team will

³ D. A. Decicco, "Police Officer Candidate Assessment and Selection", *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Vol. 69:12, December 2000, pp. 1-6.

⁴ J. Pynes and H.J. Bernardin, "Entry-Level Police Selection: The Assessment Center is an Alternative", *Journal of Criminal Justice*, No. 20, 1992, pp. 41-52.

coordinate their efforts with other CHP departments to set direction and establish new goals and objectives in an effort to improve cadet graduation rates.

Enhance the CHP Explorer Program

Graduates of the CHP Explorer Program have a higher probability of completing the Academy training program when compared with the average cadet applicant with no prior training. The CHP Explorer Program prepares young people to become officers and is a great recruitment tool. A study of 25 CHP Academy Cadet Training Class I-1994 through CTC II-2000 showed a 23% overall attrition rate. During the same 25 Academy classes, former CHP Explorers had only a 12% attrition rate. Clearly, the graduates of the CHP Explorer Program who go on to apply as CHP cadets will positively impact Academy graduation rates.

Provide cadet applicants 30 days notice before reporting to Academy

Too often, during the first two weeks of cadet training, each cadet training class would lose a cadet due to insufficient time to prepare reporting to the Academy. Cadet applicants were given less than four weeks notice prior to reporting to the Academy, thus creating added stress when they must leave their family and travel a great distance to report to Sacramento for Academy training.

A directive should require a cadet applicant be provided notice no less than 30 days prior to reporting to the Academy for training. This would provide cadet applicants sufficient time to prepare and organize family matters in order to minimize the cadet applicant's distraction, enhance their focus during training, and allow them to successfully graduate.

Allow cadets access to technology

The new generation of cadets reporting to the Academy is well versed in the use of new technology. Allowing cadets to use the cell phone, Internet, and web cams after class hours would provide the opportunity for them to communicate with their families. This is particularly important during the first two weeks of training when a number of cadets drop out due to homesickness or frustration over an unresolved family issue at home.

Present accurate orientation to applicants regarding Academy training demands

The CHP can directly impact cadet graduation rates by the kind of message it delivers during its statewide recruitment campaigns. Moreover, the Commissioner is a critical messenger who can set the expectation and define the type of cadet applicant the CHP is looking for: committed, trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and a responsible citizen. Moreover, during pre-academy orientations, applicants who are about to report to the CHP Academy must receive information regarding the rigorous physical and psychological demands of a six-month live-in Academy. The goal is to have cadet applicants who clearly understand the physical and psychological demands of academy training.

Accomplishing the goal of identifying the committed and capable cadet applicant during the hiring process has a direct correlation with positively maximizing cadet graduation success rates. Decicco emphasized that “departments should scrutinize the selection of candidates before attempting improvements in police officer training.” Indeed, LAPD appears to be on the right track when it is seeking to integrate its recruitment, hiring, and training departments in order to have a collaborative working relationship which captures all input in order to improve the selection process of cadet applicants.

Identify and eliminate preventable injuries

The CHP Academy has experienced a significant number of cadet injuries occur from the waist down. A study conducted by a former CHP Academy training instructor, in collaboration with the United States Marine Corps physical training program, revealed two primary causes of foot injuries would also affect other parts of the legs and waist. First, selecting proper running shoes is a key method of preventing injuries. Second, the way cadets are grouped when running the training course is also a method to prevent injuries by not grouping experienced runners with beginners. Although this study was never formally documented, the formation of the CHIPS team mentioned above will be charged with the responsibility of making sure there is formal documentation that can be shared with future academy training instructors, or perhaps include this finding in departmental training manuals.

Implement cadet tutoring/mentoring program

A formal tutoring and mentoring program is another method that would reduce cadet attrition rates. It is a fact that some cadets will have difficulty meeting Academy performance standards whether it is academics, high speed driving, or shooting skills. Initiating a cadet tutoring/mentoring program is a good start.

Identify who is responsible to help implement change

The responsibility chart, illustrated by Table 5 below, is a tool that can help evaluate decisions or actions required to successfully maximize the Academy’s cadet graduation rates. The key players that have a degree of responsibility in advancing critical action items are listed at the top row of Table 5. For example, the first row details who must decide or act in order to positively advance a particular recommendation. The first column details the suggestions that would help improve attrition rates. The responsibility chart is a great management tool to help leaders assess the behavior, decisions and actions of key players in their organizations. It can also be an accountability tool to ensure key players, charged with specific responsibilities, will do their part to maximize cadet graduation rates by 2012.

Table 5: Responsibility Chart

R= Responsible A= Approve S= Support I= Information -- = Not applicable

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Decisions or acts | Academy Commander | Background Investigators | Recruiters | Instructors |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Establish the CHIPS Team | I | S | R | S |
| Enhance the CHP Explorer Program | S | S | R | S |
| 30 days notice prior to reporting to Academy | I | S | S | S |

Align the selection process

Open communication and collaboration between all stakeholders in the selection and training process must happen. Furthermore, when attempting to improve the selection and training program, focus should be devoted to **identifying applicants with the greatest potential**. Planning discussions must also address the issue: Do we have a **“selection screen”** that filters out the not-so-serious applicants and filters in the highly-committed applicants that will have a high probability of graduating from the academy?

Based on the objectives of the Project team, and the work of the CHIPS team, the Highway Patrol should set a target of reducing cadet attrition to no more than 10% by the year 2012 and sustain that level of maximum attrition for the future. What supports this objective, and thereby its achievement, is the consistent collaboration amongst all stakeholders in the selection process; workable suggestions by other law enforcement agencies as well as the experts on this topic.

POSITIVE IMPACT

Improving attrition saves money. When it takes \$100,000 to train a CHP cadet, thousands of dollars can be saved just making simple improvements in the way the CHP select and train its cadets. The academy is not the real world of police work. It is, however, a filter designed to eliminate those with the weakest abilities and develop those who are committed and can satisfy the training standards. By keeping the attrition rate for each academy class at, or below, 10% we achieve a realistic and attainable goal.

SUMMARY

It is imperative for the CHP to improve the effectiveness of its selection and training process. Clearly, there is an ever increasing demand for services provided by the CHP, and maximizing academy cadet graduation rates must be one of the strongest, not the weakest, link to a healthy future for the CHP and the state. To inadequately address this issue is to fail as leaders in planning the future health and survival of the organization and its mission. Part of CHP’s future survival depends on maximizing the Academy cadet graduation success rates by 2012. As they struggle to find their own solutions, others should do the same. The problems may differ from agency to agency, but one thing is true for all: Who we hire, and who we can keep through the training process, will create the foundation from which all of our efforts must start. Controlling attrition through astute management of hiring and training is a great first step.